Autumn Internationals: Coaches Urge Borthwick to Rest Lions Stars

Borthwick has been fortified by Premiership Rugby coaches to rest British & Irish Lions stars during England's Autumn Internationals for health-related reasons. Players who competed in the Lions series in Australia this summer were directed to 10 weeks' recovery, meaning they will miss the initial two rounds of the new drive but return for three matches before England's November opener against the Wallabies.

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Tom Curry recently underwent planned wrist surgery, having performed for the Lions with a torn ligament, and is doubtful for Sale before England's Autumn Internationals fixtures. Meanwhile, Tommy Freeman (34 matches), Maro Itoje, and Ben Earl, who exceeded the 30-match cap last season, are expected to be carefully managed across the schedule.

In 2021, nine of England's 10 Lions representatives suffered major injuries after hurrying back for club duty. Likewise, in 2017, Itoje and Owen Farrell missed one autumn Test due to exceptional workloads, with Eddie Jones revealing the pair, furious about missing £25,000 match fees, had to be rested.

The new club-country agreement signed last year secures England internationals a salary of £160,000. Premiership clubs believe the costs of welfare management should be shared with England, who will also face Fiji, New Zealand, and Argentina

this autumn. Clubs can apply for dispensation to allow Lions players early-season involvement.

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Autumn Internationals 2025: Clubs Manage Stars as Coaches Call for England to Share Load

Farrell, however, has been cleared for his second Saracens debut against Newcastle Red Bulls, after a late Lions call-up following a lengthy injury-enforced absence. Still, most directors of rugby respect the agreement and want England to share the burden as preparations intensify for the Autumn Internationals 2025.

Asked about resting Freeman, Henry Pollock, Fin Smith, and Alex Mitchell, Northampton’s director of rugby, Phil Dowson replied: I’ve mooted that. Steve, as you know, is non-committal. Nearer the time, he might be, but he won’t promise anything now, and I don’t expect him to. I’ve said what I think should happen, and the RFU understands that, along with performance director Phil Morrow, Dowson added.

Saracens’ director Mark McCall granted Itoje, Jamie George, and Earl an extra week’s rest, though Farrell is set to open the season with his boyhood club. Owen is different; he’ll be available for week one, McCall confirmed, noting Elliot Daly is

targeting an October comeback from his broken arm. Asked if players could be rested by Borthwick, McCall explained: It depends on the Tests.

If there’s a relatively ‘easier’ fixture, common sense might prevail. But most players want to feature in internationals, and we’ll always support that. Curry faces a tight deadline to be ready for England’s autumn games after surgery. His recovery timeline puts him around the Autumn Internationals, so you’re more likely to see him in an England shirt than a Sale one, Sale coach Alex Sanderson said.

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England Vs Australia Tickets: Russell Given Rest as Curry Rejects Breakaway League Speculation

He often defies comeback plans and surgeons’ guesses. Scotland fly-half Finn Russell, who featured in 37 matches for Bath last season, is still enjoying a break, much like Harlequins’ playmaker Marcus Smith, who has also been given extended rest time. Bath’s head coach, Johann van Graan, stressed the importance of carefully dealing with players who have been pushed to their physical limits.

Player welfare is incredibly important, but every individual requires their own tailored care plan, Van Graan explained. The responsibility lies equally with both the club and the national team. We’ve worked hard to manage Finn’s workload effectively and will continue doing so. Over the past two years, we’ve developed an excellent relationship with him, and ensuring his long-term availability is the priority.

Meanwhile, England flanker Tom Curry has addressed rumors about his future amid speculation linking him to a proposed R360 breakaway league set to begin next September. Curry dismissed the chatter, focusing instead on his commitment to Sale Sharks, while fans eagerly look ahead to securing England vs Australia Tickets for the Autumn Internationals.

It feels like a lot of outside noise, Curry remarked Haven't heard anything about that. The speculation is everywhere, but within the playing group, it isn’t really a talking point. I’m genuinely very happy at Sale. The environment here is fantastic, and we’re doing a great job as a team. Manchester provides us with a fortunate base, and nothing will tempt me to move away from that.

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